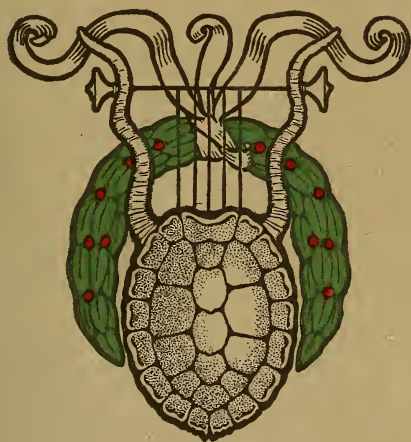


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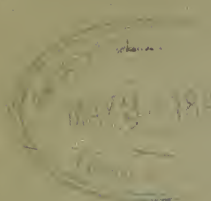
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The Waif,



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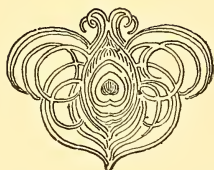
C. R. HALM



The Waif

Tones and Undertones

BY WILLIAM TOMKINS MERSEREAU



PUBLISHED BY
THE WAIF COMPANY
25 PARK PLACE
NEW YORK

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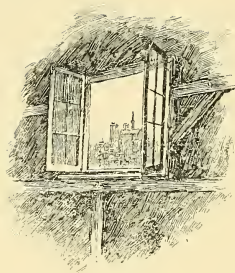


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22554

These undertones—involving pathos, pity, gladness—
Are rendered more exponent by artistic hands,
For Love's and Song's sake written, and to ease Earth's
sadness,
Must bear a balm to him who understands.

JOHN MORAN.



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THOUGHT

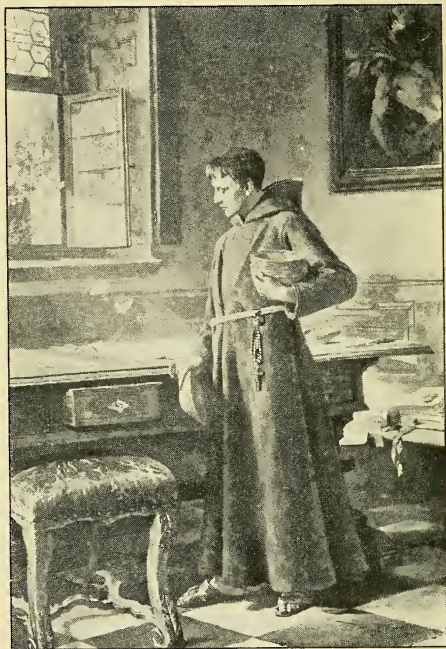


Great Master of our subtle dreams, and will,
Whose being fills each part and particle
Of this fierce-spinning ball of ours, that speeds



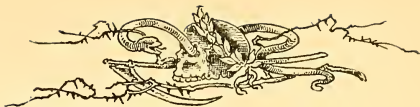
Its destined course of misery and mad mirth;
You pipe your tunes upon each quivering pulse
And nerve, and crowd us to an oversense
Of stillness; so that our fretted lives

Are but a paradox! Here, on this earth,
There is no peace, no rest, till locked in death:
Then the high-lifted soul, unshackled, flies
To such far-fixèd star as was its home,—



Its elemental home,—to perfect rest.
Swift thought is like the fine sweet fragrance of
The Rose,—an unseen joy, a phantom power!

And from the Earth's re-
volving warp and woof



We knot our A B C's of thought, and build
Such patch-work theories of the why and how
As may explain the first great impulse "Thought."
Oft this old, swinging, rolling world amain
Crosses a meteor's path, then ricochets,—
Whereat we say "an earthquake moves our globe."
In vain we try to rear our thoughts to causes,
To prove from atoms indivisible
The laws on which all science builds its throne,
And fool our feeble senses with false pride.
Oh, 'tis "a strange world, this, my masters";
But stranger still are we, and it all seems
But a long pitiless dream. And will more light
Dispel the darksome terror of the grave?



YACHTING SONG

△ HEAVE, ho! heave, ho! With a creak, creak, creak,
△ The sails crawl up the taper mast;
The captain gazes toward the peak,
Looks wondrous wise and whistles fast.

Heigh, ho, oho! Away to roam
On tossing waves where white seas foam.



Out to the sea of endless view,
Our gallant craft will soon run fast;
Her rudder holds each white sail true,
The shore and home will soon be past.

Heigh, ho, oho! Afar to roam
On tossing waves where white seas foam.

The cooling wind from off the sea,
Blows strong and hard toward the land
As waves dash high; yet sure are we
Our boat will yield to the master-hand.

Heigh, ho, oho! We long to roam
Where dashing waves toss white sea-foam.

With hearts we love time has no hours;
We kiss the breeze, nor wonder why
We long for the sea and the wild sea-flowers
While emerald waves before us fly.
Heigh, ho, oho! We will always roam
Where dashing waves toss white sea-foam.



Fresh courage take when troubles rise
Athwart life's sunlit snow-bound track;
Like phantom ships on hazy skies
They mirage prove on looking back.
Heigh, ho, oho! Oh, we love to roam
Where dashing waves toss white sea-foam!

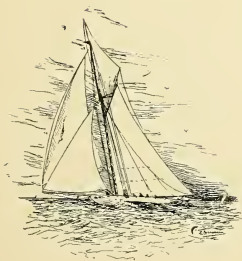
Far in the distance skies droop low,
Until they meet old Ocean's breast:
We marvel much; does it not show
That heaven and earth together rest?

Heigh, ho, oho! Ah, we love to roam
Where billows toss the white sea-foam!

Like dusty road through wooded glen,
As far astern, we onward fly;
Our wake, a wide white track doth blend
With eddying waves as we ride by.

Ha, ha, ha, ha! Away we roam
Where billows toss to white sea-foam.

So time speeds on, and life is short;
To earnest work all souls must go;
Up in the distance looms the port
Where Duty moves life's ebb and flow
Heigh, ho, oho! Back home we roam,—
Leave in the gloam the white sea-foam.



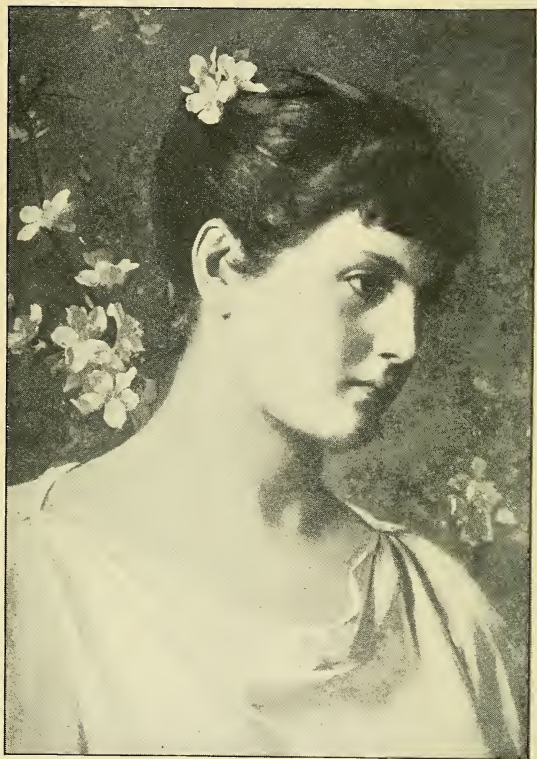
PRAYER



Who prays, does well;
For then the soul mounts heaven-
ward,
Bearing its troubles to an unknown
sea of rest
It feels is there; where every hope
seems blest.

If prayer illusion be,
With hopes and sounds
but shades of self,
Then sweep the enchant-
ment from my door,
Quick, let the grave my
dwelling be for ever-
more!





WOMAN



~**R**ARE gem of purest mould! to chant a song
Of thine exquisite grace, so I might prove
Love's loveliness is not in man! Were I
But woman now, with self to prove self's worth,
I then might sing thy praise; take thee as God
Made thee; adding what man would: thou wert
Perfection,—mirrored heaven! Thy hair
Should be as soft as daintiest gossamer
Or silken cobweb floating on Autumn's wind;
Eyes liquid, clear, like curvèd bridge's pool,
Reflecting self and all thine inner graces.
Dark, archèd eyebrows skirt thy splendid orbs,
And deep-fringed lines of curving lashes droop,
As overhanging slender grasses shade
And soften from abruptness beetling banks.



Thy nose, straight, true; as is thine honest tongue;
The ear a tiny pink and tinted shell,
Beneath caressing waves of rippling hair,



Making it wish it were indeed full hidden;
Thy blushing, pouting lips like richest rose
Ready to be ravished by a wanton bee;

Round generous bosom, rising and falling oft
Like storm-lashed waves of an imprisoned lake.
Thy skin a dazzling white, like the smooth soft
Flush of newly-polished ivory; albeit,
In passion strong, yet held in constant check,
Like blooded hound, awaiting master's hand
To break the leash and follow Nature's longings.
Thy limbs tapering and straight as church's spires;
While in thy warm embrace a mother's love
Invites both saint and sinner. Arched and true
As key-stoned wall thy foot supports aloft
A structure proud. Possessed of heart that would
Expand and leap if sympathy called twice.
Thy voice as musical and low
As murmurs of a pebbled stream;



Thy mind, I wot not, is by instinct given
To know and wisdom feel, yet cannot prove;
Knowing that often when the mind says Nay,



The heart yields Yea, and Understanding thus
Is baffled and outwitted, and thy being
Seems but a fret-work of delicious inconsistencies.

A WORLD'S SUPREME COURT

*"Now, forever farewell
The tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone."*

—OTHELLO'S SOLILOQUY.



Wars should cease, and Othello's occupation be stilled forever by the English-speaking nations. They alone should become the judiciary and police power of the world, by establishing a Supreme Court for the world.

For they are the most advanced nations, in morals as well as in commerce, literature, and science; and the equals of any in art.

For settling their differences by arbitration, and for mutual defence against all foes, they should establish a perpetual league of all-English speakers, and try to establish a final Court of Decision, composed of their own race exclusively, its members acting as arbitrators among themselves, and also between other nations of the world,

if requested, on any complicated questions that may arise; especially on those pertaining, or likely to lead, to war; and, if necessary, to use force.

How could they accomplish this?

By nations that speak the English language forming a compact, choosing at any of the general elections one delegate to every five million inhabitants of Anglo-Saxon



descent, or smaller ratio if desired. This would give to the United States about thirteen delegates, and to England and her colonies about twelve; they to be represented, not collectively, but individually, because, at some time, violent disputes must occur between themselves.

These delegates should meet at some point nearly equidistant between America and Australia.

No member of the court should be under thirty years of age,—this to secure the calm deliberation of mature years and of ripe experience,—and, so far as possible, be unbiased by political ambition, love of notoriety, or greed of gain.



Upon assembling, they should select from their number a President and Vice-President, and adopt

such rules and a Constitution as embody the salient points and methods of procedure that appear best.

A Supreme Court so constituted, should act upon all questions of an international character, and especially on those pertaining to war, protesting against the abuse of power by the strong; protecting the weak; and forcing all nations to listen to the voice of humanity and peace.

If a war be threatened between two powers, the Court should assemble and decide which is in the wrong, by depositing secret ballots.

These ballots, in accordance with their several conclusions, should be sealed in the presence of a committee chosen by the Court, no member of the Court knowing how another member has voted.

The committee should not open the ballots until hostilities have actually begun. Then the nation adjudged right, should be assisted—if assistance be required—by a combined English-speaking army, the relative quotas to be drawn from each nation representing the Court.

The defraying of necessary expenses, and the reimbursement of losses suffered, should be passed upon and approved by the Court at a later period.

Hence, the physical and moral influence brought to bear upon any ruler contemplating war would be so great, he would not dare to take the risk; while the whole world would morally sustain the combined armies in their effort to force an early peace.

Can the world conceive of a more noble sight than a body of honest, brilliant, well-intentioned men assembled to act as mediators, the olive branch their crest, bent upon preserving good-will to all nations?

And do we not owe to old England, our mother country, a coalition that—on account of circumscribed limits and the gigantic strides of other nations with wider area for expansion—she needs, our strong protecting arm and national assistance?

Take, for instance, Russia, the huge octopus, stretching out her steel tentacles to the uttermost parts of the earth, absorbing and trying to assimilate all nationalities coming within her grasp; suppose she should throw herself upon England, draining her life-blood, and, in the serpentine folds of ignorance and corruption, crush her noblest inspirations? Would it not then be our duty to England, to ourselves, to humanity, to do all in our power to prevent so great a catastrophe?

With all her faults, the country to whom we owe our existence yet commands our reverence. She it is that has longest been solving the problems of humanity; is still in the advance of civilization.



A SUMMER DAY

Wide, bounteous field of boundless green,
Far-stretching toward the southern sky,
Where white rift-clouds are deeply piled
In noble grandeur, till they seem
By nature forced and rounded out



To beauty ; then laid deftly on,
A ground of gentle azure blue,
Daintiest of all the rainbow-hues.
Adown the distance dream-eyed oxen mark

Their rutted path with silver foam down-dropped,
Crush tender grass and blossoms 'neath their feet,
And sweetly scent the balmy summer air
As on they draw their load of *winter breath*.



A slender, silver-throated brook speaks love
To birds and flowers along its shaded banks;
While bending skies toss down their sweetest smiles,
And tune my soul to better thoughts, working
In me harmonious sympathy. The robin
Pipes his notes to splendid song, then shakes his
Jaunty head in impish glee; a cricket too
Would ape the robin's merry note, while I,
A lazy speck of life, outstretched to make
A landscape, gaze dreamingly, and hear
The unseen millions of the insect-world
Whir low, or hum primeval harmonies;

Or the cicada's note, strident, yet lulling.
Thus floats my raptured soul upon a sea
Of melody, to land of dreams, and days



Of youthful love, where wanton winds of scented seas
Blow softly ; so my lazy summer day
Becomes, at last, a perfumed memory.



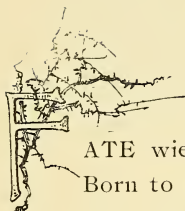
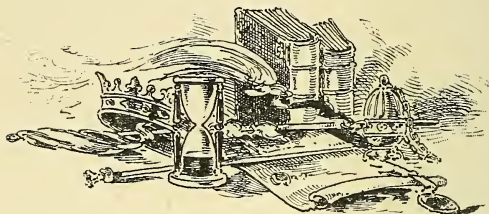


TO ELLEN TERRY

Spirit of Art voices each word of thine!

Yet, could the imprisoned soul speak half it feels
And *yearns* to give, yet craves a half-return,
The Omniscient still would whisper in thine ear,
“Wait, not yet!”

THE MUTE



ATE wields a sceptre over every soul
Born to this world, though prosperous seas
may roll,

And speed a welcome; yet the stern decree
Goes forth, and man must yield to Destiny.

Even the gods that hover over birth—

Bright, sparkling Speech and joyous, lightsome Mirth—

Are ruled by Fate: on earth they also mourn

As mortals do when children mute are born.

Near each new soul they press to kiss its lips,

Fear sways their hopes, lest each her mission miss:

Each longs to give her gift to mortal man,

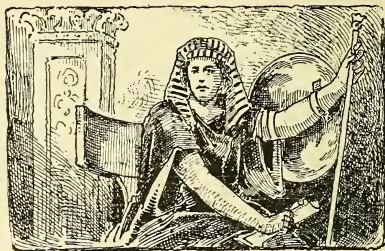
But Fate has summoned Silence, to command.

He is a Monarch cold and cruel,
Who sits in robes of black, to rule
His sombre court,—a retinue of still
And sullen courtiers. His iron will
In chains doth bind the noblest musings
Of the mind, crushing the soul that tries to raise
Triumphant song its Author's name to praise,



And hushes Music when she seeks to throw
Her subtle charms—enchanting, soft, and low—
Around his midnight world. So, helpless, bound,
He struggles with his very life for sound;
Till, goaded, he makes fingers mute, declare
“Silence, I thee defy!” With eyes aflare

Up-springs the tyrant, silent as his breath,
Then writes: "To even whisper here is death!"
Two gods that hover over every birth—
Bright, sparkling Speech and joyous, lightsome Mirth—
Outspread their wings,
And lightly flew
Beyond earth's view.





VESPER BELLS

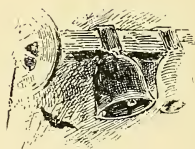
Vesper bells are sounding prayer,
Prayers of music everywhere,
Soft they fall upon the air,
Lifting souls from shame and care.

Ringling chants,—the spirits pause,
Since they speak in Mercy's cause,—
God will always hear such prayer,
Sinless praise they waft Him there.

Voiceless tongues sad cadence swell;
For, on plaintive notes they dwell,
Wailing low, in sad refrain,
Earnest prayer, nor plead in vain.

Loud their joyful notes they raise,
Now transcendent song of praise;
Back to earth their echoes bring
Hopes to which all men may cling.

Vesper bells, ring out your prayer,—
Music's prayer floats everywhere,—
Vesper bells, I love your prayer,
Music's prayer hulls every care.





THE EVICTED TENANT



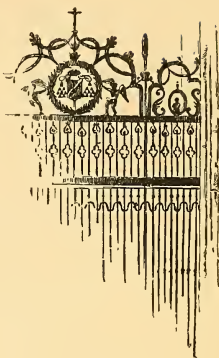
Up the green lane, past the noise-crowded street
I saw a young lass with face fair and sweet,
Soft red cheeks, and a short chubby nose,
Under her petticoat, five little toes.



With a smile I stole a fresh rosy kiss,
Then whispered to her, "Pray, tell how is this,
You hide with such care that fair snowy rose,
While out on the ground are five bare toes."

“D’you see the cottage just over the way?
There Pleasure and I’ve passed many a day,
When I planted that bush of pure snowy rose
There was no peeping out of my five naked toes.

“But Mammy got sick, and our old
cow died;
Then Daddy took drink his sorrow
to hide.
From the landlord cruel I stole this
rose,—
He didn’t see it, you know, nor my
five bare toes.



“And now we are going to leave to-day;
And Janet has no shoes, so she wears mine away.
I came here to look at my last lovely rose,
And that’s why you see my five naked toes.”

She burst into tears, which fell thick and fast
And over the wind-made fringe trickled past,
And washing her feet, as white as the rose,
Like so many gems seemed her five bare toes.

A MERE BAGATELLE



AH, Comtesse, if I knew—if I but dared believe.”
“Be quiet, mon cher, he is yet here”—glancing furtively at the silken portières that divides her apartments from those of her lord and master.

A tread as of retreating footsteps, a heavy door reverberating throughout the house, and the two peer through the casement at a tall figure going hastily down the street.

“And now let us resume our little talk, do you say?” and her expression quickly changes, while from the corners of her almond-shaped eyes she darts a world of sentiment.

It is not lost on Alphonse Mercier. Have any looks those eyes yet thrown, failed to make his heart leap? Her love is to be his reward. Have not glances, tones, smiles, forgetfulness of others—all proclaimed it?

For she is unhappy, this beautiful young comtesse. Wedded while but a child, to one wholly incompatible, what wonder the heart has just opened to his protestations of love.

“They are treacherous, those de Granvilles,” said a friend to him one day. “Madame la Comtesse is truly one of them. She has counted her victims—yes, by the dozen.”

“That may be,” responded the lover; “can any beautiful woman fail to attract? If the silly moths will fly about the flame, why, who can pity them?”

"Ah, *bien*, we must all learn; you, too, are not to be left out."

And the tender looks and words are resumed. No one informs the count. "He has eyes and ears," say his friends.

And he uses them, too, and interrupts a thrilling love scene that very evening: "*Canaille*, meet me there!" and he throws a card in the lover's face.

"For thee, love; then to be one forever," she reads that night, in a hurriedly-written note thrust into her hands by her maid while combing the waves of yellow hair.

The white hand trembles slightly as she leans forward and toys with the jeweled rings on the dressing table.

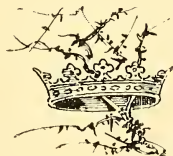
"Not so hard, Marie; I have a most tender head; you must think it is made of wood"—her pettish protest permitting the uneasiness she is endeavoring to hide.

The morning dawns with a blush and a smile, a roseate shaft of light striking aslant the yellow jealousies of my lady's chamber.

As she sits in a ciel-blue *négligé*, fingering absently some scented missives just handed her, monsieur le compte steps in:

"Morning papers, love! Maybe something of interest to you." And he stands before her dressing mirror, stroking his mustache, glancing stealthily all the while at the image reading a marked column.

"Thirteen, an odd number," thinks she, motionless for a moment. She then throws aside the journal with a yawn.



PATIENCE



God teaches me to wait;
By every opening flower and
budding tree;
Slow haste develops best hu-
manity.

God teaches me to wait;
When I would haste and
swiftly run the road,
Where others slowly toil be-
neath their load.

God teaches me to wait;
When on the grim old solid rocks I see,
The countless ages past,—still more to be.

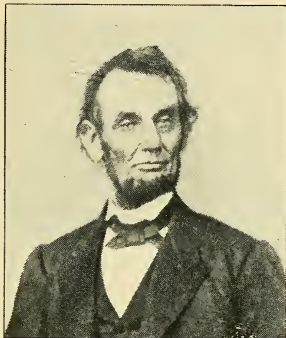
God teaches me to wait;
In the small acorn that, with sun and breeze
And slow, slow growth, is King among the trees.

God teaches me to wait;
When things seem evil they are often good:
By me the fruit, not bud, is understood.

God teaches me to wait,
If in Life's lessons patience I will heed:
They are so plain "that he who runs may read."



LINCOLN

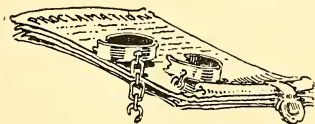


A gentle, noble soul! The outer
world
Of spirits rose when thou didst
enter there;
A vast array encompassed thee
—death snatched
The unfinished precepts of a
finished life,
And sealed them by the mad
assassin's hand.
A weary nation's heart at once
was plunged

In sorrow, and called aloud for vengeance.
'Twas said that thou didst know Destruction's eye
Had marked thee for his prey, and that this thought
Dimmed all thy joys with secret sadness strange.
But now a martyr's starry crown rests
On thy noble brow, proving to nations all,
As well as unto millions yet unborn,
The love that lives in man for men. So great
A ruler filled with good, and with a father's
Tenderness, the sun's refulgent radiance
Ne'er streamed upon. The sorrow-bearing heart
Though weary oft, had but a single thought.
The tall form bending with a Nation's woes
Upheld a saddened face, where lines of chastity
Spoke truths of thee; whence all men felt that God
Had made thee equal to His trust. Quaint humor
Often toyed with care; for humor gave thee rest.
Sprung from the people, thou wast ever true

And watchful of their needs. This gave repose.
Thy logic seemed Divine, and so made sophistry
Droop and withdraw; thy reason, all thine own,
O'ercame diplomacy; thy wisdom rare
Baffled the wisest utterance of the sage;
And, linked to truth, thy words like arrows sped
Unto their mark, and, piercing, swiftly brought
Dissension to thine enemies. Thine oath
Was registered in heaven; thus thy laws,
On justice founded, always were supreme.
Benevolence, large-hearted, with a broad
And tender charity, "planted not knowingly
A thorn in any bosom;" so that what
Men call great and good was truly thine, and makes
All other greatness little by comparison.
Where faults were known, they dimmed by human
helplessness.

What diplomats call policy, or by
One lie but seek to prove another's true,
Was to thee inconceivable, apart;
While weak, compared to "men of blood and iron,"—
Now miscalled "strong,"—thy blood swept from the land
The spectre Slavery, and fetters clank
No more, and thus make mockery to heaven
Of human liberty chained like a dog.
Thy modesty outweighed thy dignity,
And dignity yielded its poise and grace;
But heaven gave to thee such noble gifts
As caused two worlds to kiss the footstool
Of thy grand nobility and gather
At thy shrine, made from "Malice toward none
And charity to all mankind."



SONG OF THE SOUL



THE day was dull, and gray, and
still,—

Had a touch of gloom and a vicious
will;

The cold came on with a fog and a mist
And a shiver and chill none could resist;

The wind not raw—yet a velvet touch has a tiger's claw.

Out in the cold, in the fog and the wet,
A gray-haired man piped a clarionet;

Weird and battered, the man and the reeds,—
Parcel and part of each other's needs:

Forlorn in the air went his quavering notes.

Mist gathered in drops, and fell like rain,
With the quavering notes in his sad refrain;
 This old man's music—strange to tell,
 This song without words—bound all with a spell:
Was it the song unsung of which the poets sing?

His soul piped out with an earnest zest
An opera-air, "I have sighed to rest,"
 So sad, so true, with such longing
 strain,
 All eyes were wet; and the mist and
 rain
Kept pattering time with his heart-beats'
 rhyme.

His soul was tossed with the strain of life;
He played alone, midst its fiercest strife;
 No home, no love, when he lay at
 night.
 And the fog and the rain would come
 in spite
'Tween the love he had lost long, long before.

On a new-found air he he would often start;
But his reed refused to do its part;
 And play as he would, no other refrain
 But the old fond one stole in again;
Still our hearts and his kept a rhythmic time.



He played long and sweet, yet he never knew
The tunes were not changed, though he thought each new
While piping his reed for pittance and gain ;
It was the old sweet longing and sad refrain
“I have sighed to rest.” Give rest, God, who can!—
'Twas the soul that was playing, and not the man.





A DREAM

Last night I dreamed I died,
But better far such death than life;
For I had died for thee, yet, dying,
Kissed the hand that sent me to the strife.

For life without a hope of thee
Is not a life, but rather living death,
And linking life to death—as were no hope—
Is hell,—perish the thought ere it has breath!





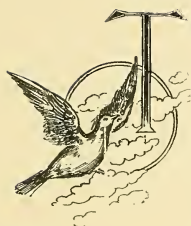


Three persons one. One person three
Thrice holy One. Thrice holy three.
One Faith, One Hope, All Charity.



THE ÆSTHETIC GOSPEL

A Glimpse of Its Metaphysics.



THE following colloquy occurred between the returned Mahatma of a distinguished modern philosopher and one of earth's sceptic scribes,—an ordinary mortal. Said the scribe:

“And you say that the ineffable influences are now centreing upon one of America's favored sons, and that he will proclaim, with fervor, the coupled doctrines of ‘sweetness and light’ and of form and color?”

“Yes. And the æsthetic metaphysics that will emanate from his virile personality will be fused into a concrete activity, that will disarm and persuade many that once were sneering, sceptical mortality.”

“His name?”

“No matter.”

“Do you believe that the ideas and views of æstheticism will, when fully explained in lectures and pamphlets, create in New York and elsewhere in America a school of your peculiar philosophy?”

"Yes. But of course that depends largely upon the receptivity of the Americans, and their desire to understand the high principles of our unwritten philosophy."

"I scarcely understand your answer. Do you mean that you have no particular laws or tenets of your philosophy?"

"Not at all. On the contrary, we have a positive, special, independent metaphysical science; but the mind of the average Philistine Briton is incapable of understanding it; consequently we have never published it: we transmit it orally to the members of our society. But inasmuch as the American people have welcomed all advanced ideas on religion, art, philosophy, and æstheticism, I am ready to answer any question pertaining to our cult."

"Suppose you give me a few condensed ideas of your subject, so that I may, somewhat, prepare the minds of the people, and, as it were, feel the pulse of public sentiment."

"I shall be glad to. And I shall try to give you an outline of our metaphysical science, as we believe it our duty and mission to the world to have it study the creation of the beautiful, its relation to color, tones, light, shadows, and to attain perfect harmony by exquisite blendings, so that man may have a higher and nobler estimate of what is beautiful and true both in nature and in art.

"In the first place, we believe that there is no actual difference between the world of matter and of space, because matter is a part of space; that God has made Himself manifest



to us through what we call Form; or, in other words, matter is space with Form; Space is matter without Form.

“Form is the manifestation of God to us. Therefore, Form is the essence of all matter, or God.

“Won't you please mention, in detail, what are the essentials of thought and act that we should aim at, so as to bring us this rarefied vision, this intimate touch and appreciation of the æsthetic philosophy?”



“Now, our views on this subject are: the nearer we approach the beautiful and graceful in the form of things, the more God-like it is, and consequently, the

more perfect the pleasure it gives. When the creative hand of man has built or moulded a beautiful thing, the part of his mind that created it becomes its soul; but when it is destroyed, its form or beauty has gone, just as, when a

man dies, his form has left us. So in poetry; the more beautiful its creation, the more enjoyable; and as I must bring my revelation to a close, I will give you one of my unpublished poems, which partly illustrates my views on the longing of the soul for the beautiful and unattainable:

“Our soul is like a kite,
That soars with ease toward heavenly height,
Held by a link-part visible;

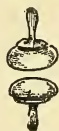
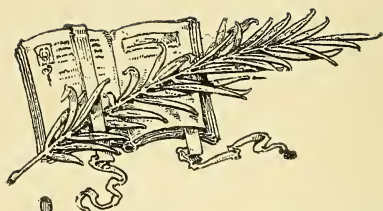
“On earth through nature see,
But only feel when reaching toward Infinity
This feeble link that binds with life.

“So frail the thread of life,
Our souls could not endure the strife
Without this link with heavenly heights.

“We droop as blighted things,
From clouded faith, on earthly wings,
Struggling to trust the invisible.

“Our soul longs for new life,
Breaks the frail thread by constant strife,
Nor ceases its unending flight.”





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


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

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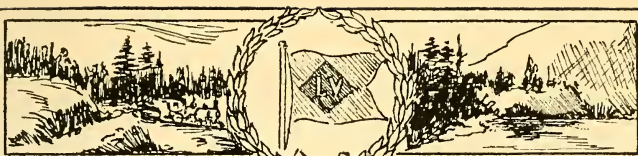


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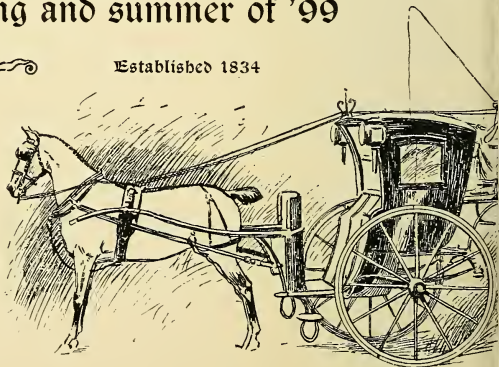
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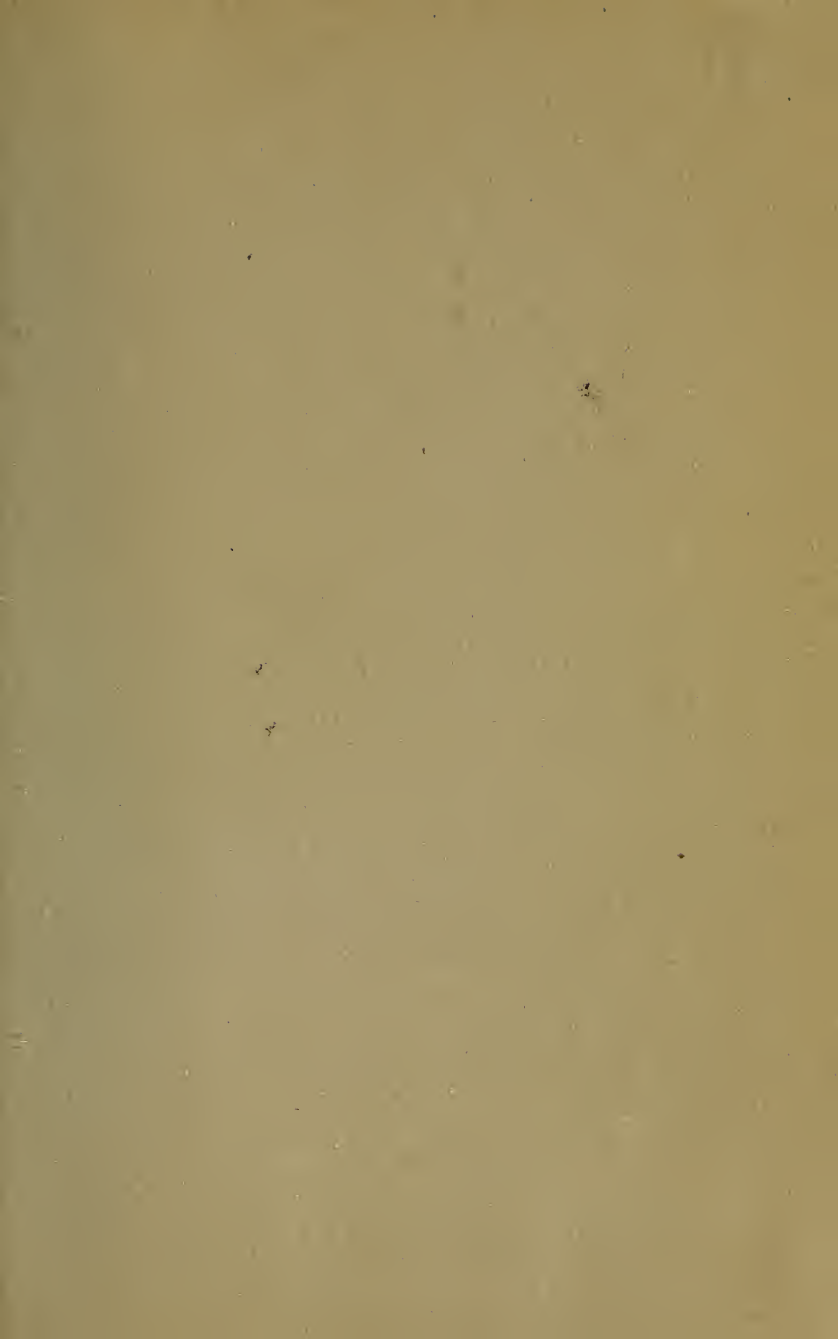


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